

Enterprising and future focused?

The first report from the Regional Education for Enterprise Clusters Evaluation.

Authors – Roberts, J. McDowall, S. and Cooper, G. Report prepared for Ministry of Education and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. 2008.

Type and objective of programme: The initiative's overall aim was to embed an enterprising culture within clusters of schools nationwide based on characteristics of their communities.

To develop young people's competences in innovation and managing and setting up businesses.

Six broad types of E4E activities, each with different strengths and challenges, were:

1. Identifying "enterprising" opportunities within existing teaching and learning approaches
2. Business or community expert as teacher
3. Teacher-created "purpose"
4. Creating real knowledge to meet a real need as a practice activity
5. Teacher-directed real work for a real purpose in the real world
6. Student-led real work for a real purpose in the real world.

Target group: Secondary school students.

Type of evaluation: This multidimensional evaluation aimed to: investigate processes and outcomes; provide ongoing formative feedback; evaluate progress towards sustainability; and assess the conceptual viability of the E4E strategy.

Methods: Mixed method design with qualitative and quantitative elements, including: consultations with programme co-ordinators; surveys of school principals and students; focus groups of students; case studies of schools; and surveys of community/business partners

Main findings:

The Education for Enterprise (E4E) programme was perceived to offer considerable potential as a vehicle for "21st century learning".

It appears that the clusters are on the way towards establishing networked leadership and professional learning communities, although they may not yet meet literature-based expectations associated with quality professional development and transformational whole-school/system change.

Influence has been two-way, with schools and clusters driving E4E development "on the ground" as well as national leaders driving it "from above".